



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

Making new friends

Sgt. Josh Cutty, of Pittsburgh, Penn., with Tactical Psychological Operations Detachment 1120, 303rd Psychological Operations Company, attached to the 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division, gets to know some neighborhood kids while on a mission with Iraqi National Police in the Sha'ab area of the Adhamiyah district in Baghdad March 6.

Karkh business owners working together

By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim
2-1 Cav. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - Throughout communities within the United States, business owners gather to form a tightly wound network to strengthen their local economy. For the past year or so, the Karkh business owners have tried to form their own network in hopes of achieving the same aims.

When Baghdad's Karkh district business owners met at the District Advisory Council Hall March 3 to elect their representatives, they decided they needed more time, to not

only figure out who would best represent them, but also needed more time to hash out their newly-formed organization's bylaws.

Maj. James Adams, the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, executive officer, of Alexandria, La., said coalition forces, who serve as advisors, couldn't be prouder of the delay.

"This is governance in action," Adams said proudly. "This shows so much functionality. They made a decision and went with it. This showed courage and functionality to make a decision."

Capt. Jason Lewis, the 2nd Brigade

Combat Team's Civil Affairs officer, who calls Portland, Ore., home, agreed that the elections should take more time. He said the officers should be those business owners who have done well despite the war.

"They are natural leaders," said Lewis. "They have the power or 'wasta,' a local term used for people with pull. They can survive the war and drive around in a Mercedes. They are the people you want running Baghdad."

According to Adams, the DAC, which

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Big Red One artillery troops train in Kuwait

By Pfc. Nathan Smith
4-1 Inf. Public Affairs

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait -- Less than a century ago, the U.S. Army engaged in trench warfare. Soldiers have adapted to different forms of combat over the years, and the battle in Iraq is no exception. Today, the Army must adjust to the rigors of urban combat.

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment not only had to train up on their Military Operations in Urban Terrain skills, but they also had to make the transition from functioning as artillery to infantry for their deployment to Iraq.

To facilitate this transition, the Soldiers of Battery B, 2-32nd FA conducted close-quarters marksmanship training at the MOUT Range here, Feb. 17.

1st Lt. Jeff Christy, the platoon leader of second platoon, Battery B, said his



(Photo by Spc. Ben Washburn 4-1 Inf. Public Affairs)

Sgt. Joshua Hess of Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, practices his skills on a Military Operations in Urban Terrain range at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

Soldiers have accepted this challenge and are performing admirably.

"They're absolute sponges," Christy said. "Each time we train, a new dynamic is introduced into this training. They've really absorbed

it, and they're doing a fantastic job."

Christy said the unit has made great progress from the beginning of their close-quarters marksmanship training in October to now.

Sgt. 1st Class George

Allen, the platoon sergeant of 2nd Platoon, Battery B, said the training is more intense than when the training began during the unit's rotation at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

"Here, we have subject matter experts who help assist not only myself and the platoon leader," Allen said, "as well as those lower enlisted to grasp what it's like to maneuver and engage on a target. Not only is this training intense, but it prepares us for our next step headed toward Iraq."

Allen said his Soldiers are accepting their tasks enthusiastically.

"I can honestly say I wouldn't want to deploy with another group of Soldiers," he said. "The Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Battery B, are very highly motivated, eager to train, and eager to learn."

"They're focused on the mission at hand."

Arabic Phrase of the Day

zghayir

Defined:
little

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 79
Low: 52



Tomorrow

High: 82
Low: 52



Monday

High: 79
Low: 55

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Chamber of Commerce

Karkh

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provides legitimacy to the, would-be chamber of commerce, would work together with the organization to enforce standards on other business leaders.

"We want to put your family, your neighbors, your friends to work ... the DAC has recognized that, and we know that's the way to proceed," said Maj. Chip Daniels, the infrastructure coordination element chief from Palmyra, Pa., to the DAC members and business owners.

In other districts of Baghdad, such as Al Doura, the chamber of commerce has flourished. It's opened more than 170 different shops and numerous markets by using the same principles, according to Lewis.

"We want [Karkh] to learn from the lessons in Doura because it's been successful there," he said. "Businessmen will listen to other businessmen."

"The bottom line is the jobs," said Lewis. "I think the insurgency is caused by people not having jobs."

He added that it's not about hiring people to do senseless work, or the "band-aid" method, but rather jobs with viable skills and

trades that would ultimately help increase the local market.

"Karkh is right on the cusps of economic surge," said Adams. "This district is going to be a shining star for the rest of Baghdad; it'll be the model for the rest of Baghdad."

The question of how long it would take for Karkh to have a fully-functional chamber of commerce may be answered by U.S. history. Adams draws back to the length of time it took the founding fathers to agree on the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

"I think it's more conditions-based than time-based," he said. "You have to first build a functional council before you move on. You can work a timeline, but you have to be willing to deviate from the timeline due to members leaving and other events."

How this works out is something most of the DAC and Karkh residents are interested in seeing.

Many of them, according to Adams, eagerly await the decisions so they can just live in peace and have a nice place to raise their children.

"I see this as so monumental," he said. "One-hundred years from now, they can look back - yeah, there were some growing pains, but it was something that worked."



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim 2-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Capt. Jason Lewis, 2nd Brigade Combat Team's civil affairs officer from Portland, Ore., speaks to a few local business owners after a meeting in Baghdad's Karkh district March 3.

Baghdad in Brief

MND-B Soldiers foil roadside bomb emplacement

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldiers foiled an attempt by insurgents to emplace an improvised explosive device March 7 near Taji market.

Several insurgents were spotted and engaged by Camp Taji tower guards as the terrorists low-crawled to an area on a major highway where they could emplace the roadside bomb.

Once fired upon, the insurgents fled before they had time to fully emplace the explosive device.

Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment quickly arrived at the site and secured the area, found and recovered two 130 millimeter rounds, which were later disposed of by explosives experts.

Soldiers are currently investigating to find those responsible for trying to emplace the bomb.

'Wolverines', Apaches engage, kill terrorists

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq - A combined operation between ground forces and Apache attack helicopters engaged and killed a platoon-sized element of enemy fighters west of the Baghdad International Airport Complex on Iraqi Highway 1 at approximately 9 p.m., March 7.

A patrol from Troop A, 1st Battalion, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division reported enemy tracer fire in the area known as Az-Zaidon. As they moved toward the firing, they detected armed insurgents in an ambush position along both sides of a canal road. A truck was parked nearby.

After clearing the area of friendly forces, the patrol called for close air support from nearby AH-64 Apache attack aircraft.

The helicopter engaged the enemy fighters, killing 12 and destroying the truck, which had an anti-aircraft heavy machine gun mounted in the bed.

Senior aviation, safety officers visit Air Cav

**By Spc. Nathan Hoskins
1st ACB Public Affairs**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - The 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, welcomed senior aviation and safety leaders as part of a summit to discuss the current status and future of Army aviation, March 7.

Maj. Gen. James Pillsbury, the commanding general of the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command, and Brig. Gen. William Forrester Jr., the commanding general of the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center and director of Army safety, met with Traverse City, Mich., native Col. Daniel Shanahan, the commander of the 1st ACB "Warriors," and his staff for a short briefing before heading out to the flight line to discuss issues with the Soldiers.

While visiting with the aviators and mechanics on the air field, Pillsbury, a San Antonio native, asked if there was anything that could be done to improve upon their current work conditions, said Sgt. 1st Class

Palermo Deschamps, a platoon sergeant for Company A, 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment.

Having the ears of one of the senior aviation leaders, many Soldiers brought up issues such as simply providing head lamps for night shifts workers and more complex issues concerning the aircraft's systems and controls.

"I brought some issues up about things that crew chiefs will need; things that can be issued to the crew chief to make the work environment better since we run 24-hour operations here," said Deschamps, from New York.

Forrester took the opportunity to stress the importance of taking safety to a more personal level.

"Take ownership of not just your own actions, but of the actions of your teammate. ... The power is in you guys to protect [your] own, because if you don't then you're going to be operating with less than which you came with," he said.

After visiting with the Warriors out on the airfield, Pillsbury and Forrester sat

down and talked with the Warrior command and staff during a luncheon.

"My experience is on the maintenance side, so I'm very impressed with what I see. I've been around this Army long enough to know that, operationally, you guys and gals are at Ph.D. level," said Pillsbury.

Forrester also expressed his approval of the operations he observed during the visit.

"I'm impressed; I truly am. Because what I see in your formation is an energy," he said.

The generals weren't the only ones impressed.

Most Soldiers felt that the visiting generals were genuine concerned about the wellbeing of the troops.

"I'm happy to see that the people [who] can make the decisions are actually taking the time to come around to see our Soldiers," Deschamps said.

Pillsbury said he would work as many issues as possible and take the input he received back to the United States.



(Photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins 1st ACB Public Affairs)

After taking notes on items that might be helpful to Apache crew chiefs Maj. Gen. James Pillsbury (right), the commanding general of the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command, talks with, Sgt. 1st Class Palermo Deschamps, a platoon sergeant for Co. A, 1st Bn., 227th Avn. Regt., about the importance of the suggestions of the Soldiers March 7.

March (mid tour!) madness grips the nation

FORT LIVING ROOM, Texas - Ah, here I sit in Killeen with my feet propped up on my trusty (old) reclining couch, television remote in one hand and a frosty glass of Texas sweet tea in the other.

Even on my basic cable service I can find a sporting event to stare at 24-hours-a-day, as long as you count World Series of Poker re-runs and the World Curling Championship as sports, that is.

Truly, my cup runneth over. (Honey, can you bring me a paper towel?)

Of course, environmental leave isn't all about lazing around the house getting your better half to wait on you hand and foot.

I've been to the chaplain's reintegration training. It's all about relationships; like my relationship with the wife, the kiddies, the lawn, the garden, the runny faucet and the garage I trashed as I packed out to get to Iraq.

The reality never quite lives up to the fantasy, it seems. 'March Madness,' the annual pilgrimage of 65 NCAA Division I basketball teams doesn't either.

As I write this, it's championship week for all the conferences. Some teams from lesser leagues have already secured their conference's one automatic bid, but other big name schools sit on the bubble looking for at-large bids from the selection committee.

The truth is that for every George Mason (who made the Final Four last year) out there, there are dozens of major conference 'contenders' who get hot at the end of the year and make noise at the big dance.

There has never been a team from leagues like the Sun Belt, Horizon League or the Colonial Athletic Association win the whole she-bang.

And there won't be this year, either. Too many small schools head to the NCAA Division I Basketball Championships "just happy to be there," though they all claim otherwise. Most of them go home the first week-

Trigger Pull

Master Sgt. Dave Larsen



end, blown out by a number one or number two seed and watch the rest of the tourney from their living room, like me.

There is drama in the tournament, but in the end, the wheels of Cinderella's carriage come off as it reverts to pumpkin status.

There are the have's and the have not's in big time college basketball. Television exposure, big budgets (at big schools) and location, location, location all play a part in recruiting.

Let's face it, if you were young, talented and had every recruiter in the country drooling over having you in town for a year (because the NBA looms as soon as you're draft eligible) where would you rather play: Los Angeles with UCLA or Springfield, Mo., with Southwest Missouri State?

It's a no-brainer. Rub elbows with Kobe Bryant instead of the maker of Precious Moments knickknacks.

There's a lack of drama in the world of Major League Baseball, too. Spring training is well underway, and the major story lines in the big leagues again revolve around big-name free agent signings and the latest, greatest star foreign import offered millions by either the Boston Red Sox or the New York Yankees.

If you pick the teams from the largest cities with the biggest payrolls, chances are you will be 75 percent correct on your playoff predictions for the upcoming baseball season.

The Detroit Tigers shocked the Yankees in the playoffs and even made

to the World Series, yet it was a sluggish St. Louis Cardinals team that whipped them in the fall classic.

Despite adding Gary Sheffield, don't expect the Tigers to reclaim their American League pennant this season.

The American League will belong to either the Yankees or the Red Sox - depending on whose millionaires play better.

Forget team chemistry. In baseball it's all about buying the best talent.

In the National League, expect the Cardinals to remain on top of their game and the senior circuit.

Yet, millions of fans will fill the stands hoping that their team can find 'the right stuff' or whatever it takes to put them in the hunt for a World Series title.

All will fall short, as the prohibitive favorites grind the competition to dust over the grueling 162-game season.

For those of us who cheer on small market clubs (in my case, the Milwaukee Brewers), we can sit back and boast for a few weeks in April or May as our teams sit atop the standings. Then, like Cinderella stories in the NCAA, the bubble bursts.

Despite some cynicism, I still love sports.

I played baseball and football into my high school years and still can hit free throws (about a 75 percent clip) better than many who get millions to do it.

My sons, especially my eight-year-old, are beginning to catch the fever.

That shared love of competition, learning the "thrill of victory and the agony of defeat" is just beginning to manifest itself in my boys and its fun to see, and enjoy.

Those little boys, more than any list of 'honey-do' projects, actually keep me off the couch more than not.

That's my reality on R&R. It doesn't quite live up to fantasy, because it's better.